DEVONSHIRE HOUSE
Friends Reference
BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT

TO THE

Children of Friends, and other Young People belonging to *Falmouth*, and elſewhere.

Dear Friends, & well-beloved Children,

IN that love that earneſtly longs for your Proſperity, and growth in the Truth and Power of Godlineſs, I do tenderly Salute you; deſiring that you may grow up to be Trees of Righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lords Right Hand, that he may be glorified: I have often beheld you with an Eye of Love and Pity, and of late it hath been with me at divers ſeaſons to Viſit you with a few Lines, if poſſible to ſtir up that Mind or Spirit in you which is pure, by way of remembrance, that you may give diligent heed thereto in all your Con-

verſations, and ſo may be preſerved in the Truth of God over all the wiles of your Souls Adverſary.

And let me tell you by the way, Truth is the moſt excellent thing in the whole Earth, and there is nothing to be deſired in compariſon with it, you may read of many of its Excellencies in the Holy Scriptures; But as you become obedient hereunto you will experience it ſo in your ſelves, and will know the Lord to be your Leader, who will lead you out of all Iniquity to the perfecting Holineſs in his fear; To which end it is your duty and place not to neglect the Gift of God which is in you, that which in the ſecret of your Hearts ſhews you that you ought not to Lie, to Steal, to be Proud, Vain, or Wanton; be diligent in hearkning thereunto, and be very careful that you encline not to follow the Enemy in theſe or any other of his Temptations; But have an Eye to the Lord, and let your deſires be to him, who

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administers strength to the Weak, that he may endue you with spiritual Blessings in the knowledge of himself, and that you may grow up to a living Zeal for the Honour of his Truth. And let me further tell you, though your priviledges be very great, and your Advantages much beyond others, in that you have believing Parents, (at least some of you) who have been unto you good Patterns of Holiness, and not only so, but their Souls have been often poured out unto the Lord on your behalfs, that he may bless you with his Heavenly Day-Spring from on high, and bring you unto his divine Truth; yet after all this, and all the pains and care they used in your Education, if you come not to know some Portion of the same Life, and quickning Power in your own Hearts, that wrought in the minds of those your tender Parents, or Friends, you will be as dead and lifeless, and as certainly unacceptable to the Lord as any other Children

whatſoever. And therefore the Apoſtle's advice to *Timothy* is very expedient for you, 2 Tim. 1. 6, 7. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou ſtir up the Gift of God that is in thee, and the unfeigned Faith which dwelt firſt in thy Parents; for God hath not given us the Spirit of fear* (the Spirit of careleſneſs and indifferency) *but of Power, of Love, and a Sound Mind.* Now examine your ſelves, whether you have this Spirit of Power. Whether you have dominion over your Souls enemy. Or whether your minds yet go after the Earth or the vain Cuſtoms or Faſhions of it. If ſo, you have not this Spirit of Power, nor of the Love of God, and ſo are far from a Sound Mind.

Therefore, *Dear Children*, be very watchful, walk circumſpectly, not as Fools, but as Wiſe; put away Lying, ſpeak every one the Truth to each other; *They are my People, ſaid the Lord, Children that will not Lie.* So he was their Father [*Mark*] God is

a Father to thoſe who will not Lie; here is a glorious Priviledge that you are called to, even to be Children of God.

Be careful likewiſe, that none of you be Buſy-bodies, medling with the affairs of others, or ready to carry Tales and ſtories, for this will certainly corrupt your Minds from the Simplicity of the Truth, and it will make you idle and impertinent, that the Lord will have no regard unto you, nor his People any reſpect for you.

And let all take care that they ſtudy not to out-do one another in Cloaths and Dreſſings, as who ſhall be fineſt: But rather, *Dear Children*, and *young People*, if there be an emulation betwixt you, let it be who ſhall be humbleſt, and who ſhall be loweſt; For its the lowly God exalts, and the Meek he guides in Judgment, and with the humble he will abide: And this I have to ſay, where that *over-earneſt deſire* is to appear as fine

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as others, (tho with ſuch things as may ſeem plain) yet Pride creeps in under that Spirit, and your Profeſſion will no more keep you out of the reach of the Enemy's Power, than it does thoſe who wear Laces, Fringes and Ribands, but you will as really fall under the juſt Judgment of the Righteous God as any other proud People whatſoever.

I have this likewiſe to tell you, that it is your duty to be very careful of what acquaintance, and ſociety you uſe your ſelves to; that you may keep out of the Worlds Wayes, and Fellowſhips, and that you who are young Boyes and Girles, may not run with them in their Plays, and Sports, but may be grave and ſober as becomes thoſe profeſſing Godlineſs; for be aſſured ſuch as your Companions be, ſuch are you like to be in a ſhort time; and therefore it behoves you to ſeek after the ſociety of ſober Friends, and ſuch as love Truth, that your love thereto may grow and increaſe, and the Lord may kindle a Zeal in your Spirits, and

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make you ſerviceable to him in the days of your Youth.

And, *Dear Children*, be careful likewiſe to frequent Meetings, and to ſit ſoberly and in good order when you are there, and think not that it is enough to appear there with your Bodies while your Minds go aſtray from the Lord, but know the Lord abhors that Sacrifice, and has regard to the diligent and careful, whoſe Minds are exerciſed in his Law, and who are under an holy aw and fear, leſt they ſhould come ſhort of that Inheritance to the which God hath called them; I believe you are not without your enemy, who when he hath a little clouded the mind, endeavours to bewilder it by drawing it into many thoughts, wandring up and down in a multitude of unneceſſary Cogitations, or elſe on the other hand to ſettle down in a dry drowſy, ſleepy ſtate, and condition; which is a great ſhame to behold, and a diſhonour to the Name of the Lord; and muſt therefore be watched againſt diligently; and let your earneſt and

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hearty Petition be to the Lord, that he may perſerve you out of thoſe evils, for where theſe things become habitual, or cuſtomary to a People, Such in time loſe the ſence of God's Refreſhments & the renewings of Life, and Power which he communicates tohis watchful People.

Therefore, *Dear Friends*, be concerned, God waits to be Gracious to you, my Soul is a witneſs for him, he hath not been wanting to us to bleſs our Aſſemblies with his Preſence and the bedewings of his precious Life; And why ſhould any of us either Young or Old, be careleſs of ſo great a Bleſſing, and let our minds reſt in earthly fooliſh things? Oh! *Dear Friends*, let us be a concerned *people* before the Lord, that his Truth may ſhine in our Converſations, and in all our Meetings, This is what the Lord looks for, that we may be a living People, lively towards him, and if there be any deadneſs remains, let it be towards that which is evil, that the Enemy of

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our Souls, may never have his purpose on any of us, but that we may wait more and more for Gods Salvation; who will certainly be near unto us as in sincerity we draw near unto him.

And *Dear Children*, and *Young People*, I do further advise you, that you keep in the simplicity of the Truth, out of all craft, and cunning, and out of all shews and appearances beyond what you really are. But let it be your desire and endeavour to appear simply unto all, as you are in the view of the Lord, and its no matter how foolish men may esteem you: And that your earnest breathings be, that the Lord may search and try you, and whatever evil is in you, that he may do it away; and as your Hearts become thus exercised God will meet with you, he will shew you the joy of his Salvation, and make you beautiful in his House of Prayer, and who knows but he may kindle such loving Zeal in your Spirits as to concern you

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for the good of others, and furniſh you with an Heavenly effectual Gift, for the reproving and admoniſhing thoſe who go out of the way, and for comforting the weak and feeble, as he pleaſeth to move in you; And therefore it behoves you who are young, to be ſober minded, and to wait on the Lord that you may daily know his Inſtructions, and may follow Him who is a Teacher *near*, when we have no outward Inſtructer. To the Word of whoſe divine Grace that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory, with exceeding joy, I heartily Recommend you, and Remain,

Your Dearly Loving Friend and Brother in the Truth,

Thomas Gwin.

Poſtcript.

Postcript.

THere is yet somewhat more on my mind to communicate to you, in respect of your behaviour towards your Parents, or any other Friends, who may be concerned to caution you for your good, that you may receive it in meekness and good-will, and take heed of an angry obstinate Spirit that is heady, and high minded, and kicks against reproof; God and good men hate that Spirit, and if you go on therein it will surely destroy you, and the way of Peace you will never know. Therefore be Jealous over your own Hearts, and let Judgment have its free course, for That in you which hates reproof, and turns Judgment backward, is the greatest of all your Enemies.

And you who are more grown, take care of letting out your Affections hastily after any man or Woman in order to Marriage, but soberly wait the Lords time, seek first Gods Kingdom and the Righteousness thereof, and know thy maker to be thy Husband, who will sufficiently care for thee, and whose love is better than the Love of the whole Earth. Be Cautious there-

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fore and retired, for thoſe who let out their Minds, not having a regard to the Lord and the guidance of Truth in theſe things, They fall (as the Apoſtle ſaid in another Caſe) into a ſnare, and many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown men in Perdition.

After this ſort I have been often concerned to write to you, Dear Children *and* Young People, *and I heartily wiſh it may be effectual to the Spiritual benefit of any one particular of you, which would be a ſufficient recompence to your well wiſhing Friend.*

And you who are Parents of Children, the Concern that ought to be on you is great, not only to inſtruct and admoniſh your tender Ones, but that you may be patterns and examples of Holineſs unto them, for Childrens Eyes are uſually more upon the manners and behaviour of their Parents than upon their Precepts and Inſtructions; doſt thou think, Oh vain Man or Woman! that when thou telleſt thy Child he ought not to Lie, and thou lieſt; or that he ought not to be Proud, whilſt thou art Proud; or that he muſt not be Obſtinate, Vain or Angry; whilſt thou art ſo; doſt thou think thy inſtructions will prevail more than thy Example? truly its not very likely they ſhould; what a care then ought to be on us in reſpect of our Iſſue, that they may ſee our good examples, and

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follow us, and Glorifie God on our behalfs! And ſo we ſhall be a bleſſing unto them, and they may be bleſſings unto us, and the Lord as he hath begun will continue to bleſs us with his divine Preſence, and the early and latter Rain of his Favour, which cauſes a freſhneſs, and a ſpringing up of the Pure Seed, to the Praiſe Honour and Glory of his divine Name, who is over all eternally worthy, ſaith my Soul, and let the Dominion, and Authority be to him for ever and for evermore.

Falmouth the 14th of the 9th Month, 1690. T. G.

THE END.